

# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights



*Officers*  
J. Neil Bell, Executive Director  
Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director  
Nicolette Young, Assistant Director  
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel

Governor  
Martin O'Malley  
Chairperson  
Shawn M. Wright, Esq.  
Vice-Chairperson  
Robert L. Baum, Esq.  
Commissioners  
Laura M. Esquivel  
Norman I. Gelman  
Rabbi Binyamin Marwick  
Gary Norman, Esq.  
Naima Said, Esq.  
Gina McKnight-Smith, Pharm D, MBA

**Contact: Tara Taylor**  
**6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900**  
**Baltimore, MD 21202-1631**  
**Phone: 410-767-6459**  
**Email: [tara.taylor@maryland.gov](mailto:tara.taylor@maryland.gov)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 9, 2013**

## **MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS & MARYLAND HUMANITIES COUNCIL LAUNCH *DEFYING DEFINITIONS* SERIES IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

### **First of Three Public Dialogues Begin September 23 at Calvert Library Prince Frederick**

**Baltimore, MD** –The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) and the Maryland Humanities Council (MHC) will host the first of three public dialogues for the *Defying Definitions* project on Monday, September 23 from 6-8:30pm at the Calvert Library, located at 850 Costley Way in Prince Frederick. This kickoff event, entitled “*Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities: Exploring our Own Struggles with what ‘Created Equal’ Really Means,*” is free and open to the public. Conversation will start with an image and a short reading and will delve into the ideas of rights and freedoms and how individuals and communities can create positive change. Light dinner will be served to those attending. Attendees are asked to register online at: <http://tinyurl.com/defydef>.

This event is produced in partnership with the Calvert Library, the Community Mediation Center of Calvert County, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Throughout the fall, *Defying Definitions* will also travel to the College of Southern Maryland, La Plata Campus (October 28) and the St. Mary’s County Public Library, Leonardtown Branch (November 13) for the second and third events in this series.

*Defying Definitions* is a public conversation and community engagement program exploring identity, stereotypes, and diversity. It challenges participants to reflect on how they perceive others, how they are perceived by others, and what they understand about themselves. The project utilizes the humanities (film, literature, photography, poetry, etc.) to bring people together for dialogue, both online and in community settings, with the goals of breaking down stereotypes, reducing conflict, and modeling civil and meaningful discussion. As this project is open and ongoing, every Marylander is invited and encouraged to visit [www.defyingdefinitions.org](http://www.defyingdefinitions.org) to join in the discussion and share their story. *Defying Definitions* is sponsored in part by the Maryland Public Policy Fellows Program, a collaborative program of the Maryland Judiciary's Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law's Center for Dispute Resolution.

**The Maryland Humanities Council** is a statewide educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The purpose of MHC is to stimulate and promote informed dialogue and civil engagement on issues critical to Marylanders. For more information, visit [www.mdhc.org](http://www.mdhc.org). MHC is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the State of Maryland, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Awards: [www.bakerartistawards.org](http://www.bakerartistawards.org).

**The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights** represents the interest of the State to ensure equal opportunity for all through enforcement of Titles 19 and 20 of the State Government Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. MCCR investigates complaints of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and state contracts filed by members of protected classes under federal and state law. For additional information please visit [www.mccr.maryland.gov](http://www.mccr.maryland.gov).

###